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Message Text

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13
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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---------- 062878
R 150645 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 930
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E.9. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PFOR, YO, AS
SUBJ: YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO AUSTRALIAN PROTEST OVER EXECUTIONS

REF: BELGRADE 2103

1. GOY REPLIED ON MAY 12 TO AUSTRALIAN NOTE CONCERNING EXECUTION IN YUGOSLAVIA OF THREE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS BOTH IN BELEGRADE AS WELL AS IN CANBERRA. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR VIDOVIC MET PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MAY 12 TO PRESENT REPLY. DFA OFFICER WHO WAS PRESENT AT MEETING (F. B. COOPER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY , EUROPE, AFRICA, AND MIDDLE EAST BRANCH) TERMED REPLY FRANKLY DISAPPOINTING, IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MAY 15.

2. GOA ACCEPTS BASIC THESIS THAT NATURALIZED AUSTRALIANS OF CROAT EXTRACTION WHO TOOK PART IN ARMED INCURSION INTO BOSNIA IN JUNE, 1972, MAY PROPERLY BE DEALT WITH IN TERMS OF YUGOSLAV LAW. HOWEVER, WHITLAM TOLD AMBASSADOR VIDOVIC THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS PROBLEM THAT IT NEEDS TO BE INFORMED WHEN AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS ARE ACCUSED OF CRIMES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND HAS CONTINUING NEED FOR CONSULAR ACCESS TO THEM. MOREVER, IN CASE OF THREE EXECUTED
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AUSTRALIANS OF CROAT DESCENT, THERE IS NEED FOR DEATH CERTIFICATES SO THAT RELATIVES CAN LIQUIDATE THEIR ESTATES ACCORDING TO LAW. YUGOSLAV NOTE SIMPLY PROMISED TO MAKE DEATH CERTIFICATES AND COURT VERDICTS AVAILABLE, BUT NO ACTION SO FAR.

3. COOPER SAID THAT YUGOSLAV ACTION HARD TO UNDERSTAND, AS CASE IS NOW CLOSED. TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT HAS DISSIPATED ATMOSPHERE OF GOOD WILL WHICH SURROUNDED VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BIJEDIC IN MARCH, BIJEDIC, ACCORDING TO COOPER , COULD HAVE BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING IN KEEPING GOA INFORMED OF SITUATION. HE SIMPLY MADE GOA LOOK FOOLISH IN EYES OF AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE.

4. COOPER SAID THAT AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR ROBERTSON HAS MADE CONTINUING EFFORT TO SEPARATE BOSNIAN INCURSION OF JUNE, 1972, FROM GENERAL PROBLEM OF CONSULAR ACCESS AND PROTECTION OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS. ROBERTSON FEELS HE HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS IN THIS REGARD, BUT YUGOSLAV NOTE OF MAY 12, WHILE APPARENTLY CORDIAL ON SURFACE, HAS NOT MET NEEDS OF GOA.
RICE

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